Gravatt, Dan

From: Tapia, Cecilia
Sent: Wednesday, February 06, 2013 10:22 AM
To: Woolford, James; Johnson, Barnes
Cc: Singletary, DeAndre; Gravatt, Dan; Asher, Audrey; Hague, Mark
Subject: Fw: Bridgeton Landfill, St Louis, MO - heads up to OEM

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Superfund

We offered to loan some of our air monitoring equipment to MDNR.

----- Forwarded by Cecilia Tapia/R7/USEPA/US on 02/06/2013 10:19 AM -----

0402

From: Scott Hayes/R7/USEPA/US
To: Gilberto Irizarry/DC/USEPA/US
Cc: Kenneth Buchholz/R7/USEPA/US, Mary Peterson/SUPR/R7/USEPA/US, Lisa Boynton/DC/USEPA/US, Scott Hayes/R7/USEPA/US, Cecilia Tapia/R7/USEPA/US, Robertw Jackson/R7/USEPA/US
Date: 02/06/2013 07:47 AM
Subject: Bridgeton Landfill, St Louis, MO - heads up to OEM

Tito,
As we talked:

- See MDNR website for info on Bridgeton Landfill
- http://www.dnr.mo.gov/env/swmp/facilities/bridgetonsanitarylandfill-dnr.htm
- Bridgeton is a subtitle D landfill under Missouri regulatory oversight
- It has been smoldering for several years and odor complaints are increasing recently
- It is adjacent to our NPL site – Westlake Landfill – which has some radiation contamination and high-level activist attention
- Therefore, the activists and media are blurring the issues between the sites
- MDNR issued an order to the Bridgeton Landfill operators that they will be taking over air monitoring
- Subsequently, MDNR asked us for assistance and specifically TAGA
- We are advising that TAGA would not provide much valuable information in this case
- We are advising that EPA should not provide any on-site assistance at this time: 1. MDNR has the authority on this site 2. To do so would cause further confusion between Bridgeton and Westlake (basically)
- We are advising we could possible provide technical advise and possibly some equipment
- We and MDNR have consulted the OSCs on the Countywide site in Region 5 as well as ERT
- See attachment for RA discussion points with MDNR director
- See INSIDE EPA article for Westlake media perspective

OPA perspectives to add:

1. MDNR has the enforcement responsibility under Subtitle D, and the necessary legal authority, to require the PRP to hire qualified contractors to conduct air sampling, and otherwise encourage the PRP to meet the requirements of its landfill permit and the state's solid waste regulations.

2. EPA Region 7 has consistently communicated to the public, and to elected officials and other stakeholders, that issues related to odors and the subsurface smouldering event at the landfill are solely MDNR's, not EPA's, to regulate and address.

3. There already exists deep distrust and high suspicion among the public regarding EPA's work at West Lake. Any shift that would result in MDNR and EPA Region 7 sharing responsibility for addressing issues related to odors and/or the smouldering event would further challenge EPA's credibility and only worsen the already strongly negative public sentiments, making EPA's future work at this site more difficult.

4. Problem of establishing a precedent for EPA involvement in other MDNR Subtitle D issues.

From: Christopher Whitley [mailto:Whitley.Christopher@epamail.epa.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 11:00 AM
To: Asher, Audrey; Jefferson, Matthew; Hayes, Scott; Jackson, Robert; Hammerschmidt, Ron; Davis, Michael; Gravatt, Dan; Dawani, Karim
Subject: Fw: Inside EPA (West Lake Landfill) - State, Environmentalists Fault Advice To EPA On Key Nuclear Cleanup (West Lake Landfill)

I believe Senior Staff should already have this, but for others who may not, FYI.....

Chris Whitley

Public Affairs Specialist

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/Region 7

Office of Public Affairs

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----- Forwarded by Christopher Whitley/R7/USEPA/US on 02/04/2013 10.57 AM -----

From: David Bryan/R7/USEPA/US

To: R7 Senior Staff

Date: 02/04/2013 08:58 AM

Subject: Inside EPA (West Lake Landfill) - State, Environmentalists Fault Advice To EPA On Key Nuclear Cleanup (West Lake Landfill)

State, Environmentalists Fault Advice To EPA On Key Nuclear Cleanup

Posted: February 1, 2013 - Inside EPA

http://insideepa.com/Superfund-Report/Superfund-Report-02/04/2013/state-environmentalists-fault-advice-to-epa-on-key-nuclear-cleanup/menu-id-128.html

State regulators and environmentalists are arguing that a new report expected to inform EPA's decision on how to deal with radioactive waste at a high-profile Superfund site near St. Louis misrepresents data contained in the report to conclude that nuclear contamination has not entered groundwater and moved around the site.

EPA's decision on whether to remove nuclear contamination at the West Lake Landfill in Bridgeton, MO, or leave it in place could set precedent for how EPA deals with radioactive waste sites near urban areas in the future. The agency's National Remedy Review Board (NRRB), a panel at EPA headquarters that seeks to ensure consistent cleanup decisions nationwide, has urged the agency to consider a "hybrid" option of removing the highest level radioactive material while leaving lower level waste in place and under a cap.

A geologist familiar with the West Lake landfill says data in the Dec. 14 "Groundwater Monitoring Report" by Engineering Management Support Inc. shows contamination has entered the groundwater and spread from a section of the landfill known to contain contamination, yet the report concludes otherwise. The report was prepared on behalf of the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) at the site and submitted to EPA Region VII.

"We're buried under reports by advocacy groups trying to evade responsibility; it's not a good way to get information," the source says. The PRPs are "drawing conclusions that are exactly the opposite of what their data show."

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) also attacks the PRPs' report in Jan. 15 comments sent to the contractor and Region VII, which say the contractor's data analysis is insufficient to support the report's conclusion that contamination has not spread. In the comments, MDNR also suggests the contractor incorrectly reported the location of a contaminated well in order to conclude that contamination detected in the well is from background sources rather than contamination that has spread from the landfill.

The PRPs' claim that a well containing high levels of radium-226 is up gradient from the site's contaminated section is a chief concern for the geologist and MDNR who both say the report's diagrams suggest the well is down gradient and so the levels may be the result of contamination rather than naturally occurring background as the PRP suggests. *The comments are available on InsideEPA.com.* (*Doc ID: 2423351*)

EPA has been weighing how to handle West Lake's nuclear contamination for years and in 2008 announced a plan to leave the waste in place under a cap and monitor the site, but after public outcry, the agency shelved the idea in favor of further study. In 2011, an agency-mandated study suggested two alternatives to the Bush-era plan, but said the alternatives were more expensive than the original decision, which is still being considered. In response to NRRB's recommendation to consider the hybrid option, a Region VII official said last fall that a variety of possible solutions remain (*Superfund Report*, Oct. 29).

The geologist says he raised concerns about the 87-page report requested by the NRRB during a Jan. 17 public hearing but that Region VII officials did not respond to his criticism. The contractor's report was part of an EPA presentation at the Jan. 17 public hearing in Bridgeton, where the agency said radium was detected in 25 wells at levels above the drinking water standard, or maximum contaminant level (MCL), but also that recent studies by the U.S. Geological Survey suggest radium levels in the region's groundwater may be naturally elevated.

In addition to the PRPs' groundwater sampling, Region VII officials have recently screened wells for gamma radiation -- tests that indicated the presence of radiologically-impacted material, according to the EPA presentation. Surface gamma scans are planned for 2013, which also may help confirm the extent of radiologically impaired material, and the PRP's evaluation of contamination at West Lake is still ongoing, according to the presentation.

EPA intends to update its 2011 report of alternatives with the recent data and will put a new proposed plan for the site out for public comment prior to reaching a final decision.

Environmental groups in other parts of the country fear the Bush-era cleanup plan for West Lake would set dangerous precedent for leaving radioactive waste at urban Superfund sites at levels above the agency's traditional limits and set a precedent of allowing nuclear waste disposal at urban landfills not regulated by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). An EPA spokesman has disputed critics' characterization of the

landfill as "urban," saying West Lake is in an "industrial/suburban" area, adjacent to an industrial park and an airport.

NRC studies indicate that the average concentration of radioactive radium-226 at West Lake is about 90 piccocuries per gram (pCi/g) of soil, 18 times above the 5 pCi/g level that EPA usually uses as the cut-off point for allowing waste to remain at such a site. Some samples taken at the site indicate radium-226 concentrations as high as 21,000 pCi/g, or 4,200 times above the conventional EPA standard (*Superfund Report*, Feb. 6).

The December contractor's report concludes that levels of Radium-226 and Radium-228 in groundwater that exceed EPA's MCLs are naturally occurring rather than resulting from contamination that has moved from contaminated portions of the landfill to other parts of the site.

The PRPs say their additional groundwater sampling supports the same conclusions reached after sampling in the 1990s, which informed EPA's prior decision to leave the contamination in place and cap and monitor the landfill.

Environmentalists and state regulators are also critical of the the report's assertion that levels of Radium-226 above EPA's MCL are up gradient from the contaminated part of the landfill, suggesting the samples "are not indicative of a distinct plume(s) or area(s) of Radium-226 in groundwater."

The report uses those findings as evidence to reassert the conclusion from the 1990s that the sampling "results are not indicative of on-site contaminant plumes, radial migration, or other forms of contiguous groundwater contamination that might be attributable to the landfill units being investigated."

In its comments, MDNR says the PRPs' analysis is insufficient to support their conclusion that contamination has not spread and caused high levels of contamination in groundwater, and specifically targets the PRPs' assertion that a contaminated well is up gradient from the contaminated section of the landfill. MDNR suggests the well is down gradient, raising the possibility that radioactive material may be moving.

The geologist says that while groundwater testing and other sampling shows West Lake contains nuclear contamination, EPA should conduct better research to understand exactly what radioactive material the landfill contains. "The whole process is geared not to provide thoughtful answers," the source said. "People are not gathering the information they need, and the information they are forced to gather is misinterpreted."

A source with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment says the group also commented at the public meeting that the PRPs' report contains inaccuracies, and that the group plans to file comments on the report with EPA in the coming weeks or months.

EPA's official comment period for West Lake has passed, but a spokesman for Region VII said the agency will still consider additional comments offered by the community or others.

Talkers re MDNR request draft....

Information re: MDNR Request for Assistance - for development of talkers

1. EPA has the following air monitoring equipment available that can be loaned to MDNR:

   1-2 meteorology stations. They are used monitor wind direction speed. Provdies as good indicator on the direction that the odors may be traveling.

   4 Area Raes. To monitor for volatiles particulates and gamma.

   10 Summa canisters. Used to collect air samples over an 8 to 24 hour period. Those samples are then analyzed in a lab for contaminants of concern.

   4 Single point monitors. Colorometric sampling technology. More qualitative in nature but let's you know the presence or absence of compounds.

2. MDNR was interested in the use of the TAGA (Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer) bus and EPA's VIPER Monitoring system.

   Normally the TAGA bus is not used at Superfund sites. It's typically pre-deployed during national events with large crowds as a first line of notification for terrorist threats. However, it has been utilized at emergency responses. Use of the TAGA is coordinated through EPA HQ's Environmental Response Team (ERT). It's capabilities are for VOCs which are already being monitored by Area Raes. The TAGA dowsn't have capabilities to monitor for compounds associated with odors. Those compounds are typically semi-volatiles and acid gases. It is not available for the next 2 weeks.

   EPA's ERT TAGA point of contact is Dave Mickunas. He can offer information regarding its capabilities. He can be reached 919-541-4191; cell 609-865-1574.

   At the Ohio site the TAGA couldn't characterize the compounds causing the odors. Aluminum dross was disposed of at the landfill. It reacted with water and caused smoldering. The odor was an ammonia -like odor. The Landfill operator was directed to apply a plastic cover which contained the odors and the area with the dross was isolated. Use was paid for by the Region. Paul Ruesch was the R5 person assigned and may be able to offer technical assistance. He can be reached at 312-919-4382.

   EPA R7 has a VIPER telemetry system which takes information from the field monitors and provides real time review capabilities at ones desktop. Use of the system is complicated and would require the set up by a R7 OSC. R7 can train MDNR staff on its use if they are proficient with technology. Telemetry is currently only available for Area Raes and Data Rams. The equipment would need to be physically deployed, a link is attached to a monitor. It connects to a gateway (similar to a modem) which transmits the data to a web site. For longer term , power would be required since battery operation is limited to several hours.

3. Staffing the monitoring activities at the existing subsurface oxidation at the Bridgeton Solid waste landfill falls under MDNR's jurisdiction since the Subtitle D program. Unlike most other environmental programs Congress did not design a delegated program for solid waste management.

4. EPA's ERT TAGA point of contact is Dave Mickunas. He can offer information regarding its capabilities. He can be reached 919-541-4191; cell 609-865-1574.

5. Why not mobilize EPA resources as was done for Bannister Federal Complex, Cameron, Joplin Tornado?

The Bridgeton site is a private site regulated by MDNR.

The Bannister Federal Complex is a Federal Faci directly regulated by MDNR. However in the beginning of the project MDNR turned the site response over to EPA. In addition, the expense for EPA response was borne by GSA for the initial response. All analytical, field sampling, etc costs were paid by GSA and or NNSA. The number of EPA staff did vary during the project but no one worked full time.

The Cameron site was initially approached as an investigation of environmental contamination. Costs were paid using _____. No currently regulated facility was the target of the initial response.

The Joplin tornado response was performed under Stafford Act deployment.

6. Is the MDNR response adequate and appropriate?
   In general the analyses being conducted on the site samples appear to be similar to the approach used by Region 7 and other states in response actions. The overall MDNR plan for addressing the site and fire should include the development of the QAPP, Data Quality Objectives, methods, etc. needed for the long term response.